

ABOUT THE WORK:

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. Often referred to as the “investigative arm” of the Congress, GAO examines how public policies are being implemented and suggests ways in which they may be improved. Our role is both to meet an immediate need for information and to help the Congress better understand issues that are newly emerging, longer-term in nature, or broad in scope, frequently cutting across various government branches and federal agencies. Nearly all of our work is mandated in legislation or requested by committee leadership or individual members of appropriations, authorizing, budget, or oversight committees.

Major task areas of evaluation work include:

- developing a research design and a project plan;
- data-gathering with methods such reviewing documents, conducting interviews, and summarizing facts in writing;
- applying analytical methods to data to determine patterns, trends, or irregularities and drawing conclusions;
- maintaining proper documentation in an appropriate file management system;
- and
- presenting results, methods, and findings in writing and orally.

Specifically, in performing their duties, analysts or specialists will do some or all of the following:

- identify issues with potential savings for the federal government and make specific recommendations for how the savings can be achieved; develop a work plan and identify information sources needed to accomplish steps of the work plan within established time frames;
- obtain relevant and reliable data;
- use available resources (e.g., computer, Internet, agency databases, and review of documents) to access, obtain, and store relevant data;
- conduct appropriate analyses using the proper techniques (e.g., information synthesis, content analysis, statistics, econometrics, operations research, modeling, and accounting);
- elicit information from agency and other officials by conducting and participating in interviews;
- prepare records of interviews and other written products that summarize findings and meet expectations for clarity and conciseness; and
- work collaboratively with coworkers, adjusting to different working styles, approaches, and perspectives.

A GAO analyst /specialist is expected to support and promote collaborative efforts to achieve mission requirements; satisfy customer needs; and comply with GAO policies, generally accepted government auditing standards, and other requirements. An analyst/specialist also is expected to promote teamwork; communicate openly and candidly; participate fully in discussions; employ

techniques for problem-solving and decision-making; and ensure that the principles of equal opportunity are properly observed. Initially, an employee will be supervised closely by a more senior analyst, but as he or she gains experience, supervision decreases until the supervisor needs only to review the work to ensure that objectives have been met and GAO policies have been followed.

GAO analyst work:

GAO analysts work as part of a team to conduct in-depth research on a study requested by the chairman or ranking minority member of a congressional committee or subcommittee, or on a study that GAO has been mandated to conduct by legislation. This work is demanding, time bound, and important. Analysts must have advanced methodological and research skills and must excel at documenting the work they do, writing the results and the findings, and presenting the work to audiences ranging from their team members to congressional members and their staffs. The hallmarks of GAO analysis are accuracy, objectivity, and integrity.

GAO information technology specialist work:

Information technology specialists participate in evaluations of the federal government's \$50 billion annual investment in information systems, focusing on both institutional and system-specific IT management issues. Institutional issues include IT capital planning and investment control, enterprise architecture development and implementation, information assurance and computer security, system or software acquisition and development capability, network management, and telecommunications management. Systems-specific areas relate to modernization and to operations and maintenance programs and projects including systems architecture, system life cycle management, system investment management, and system security.

GAO auditor work:

Financial auditors perform a variety of audit procedures including evaluating the effectiveness of internal control systems, testing the propriety and completeness of information included in financial statements, testing compliance with laws and regulation, and analyzing financial data. These tasks are being performed in connection with the audit of the federal government's financial statements and other mandated audits. GAO audit work demonstrates the importance of reliable financial information and effective systems in strengthening accountability and improving control over the federal government's financial resources and program activities.